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ON

DWELLING TOGETHER IN UNITY,

A

# SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

Protestant Dissenting Meeting-House,

PRINCE's STREET, CORK,

ON SUNDAY MORNING, THE FIRST OF JULY,

1798.

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BY THE

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REV. THOMAS DIX HINCKS.

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*THE following discourse is printed at  
the request of several respectable Persons  
who heard it. They were of opinion that  
the publication of it might contribute to pro-  
mote that spirit of peace and love, which  
is the distinguishing feature of genuine Chris-  
tianity. With this view, their request has  
been readily complied with, though the sen-  
timents it contains are such as have been  
often enforced, and must be familiar to  
many readers.*

*Should any profits arise from the pub-  
lication, it is intended to apply them to the  
fund for the support of the poor belonging  
to the Congregation.*

4 OC 58

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*Behold ! how good, and how pleasant it is,  
for brethren to dwell together in unity.*

PSALM, CXXXIII. I.

THERE cannot be a more striking proof how little effect principles generally have upon practice, and how seldom men pursue their own true happiness, than the dissensions which take place in society, occupy so large a share of our attention, and prevent us from enjoying those blessings which our Heavenly Father has enabled us to obtain. There are few individuals, none whose opinion has any just claim to attention, who will attempt to controvert the assertion

assertion made by the Psalmist, in the words I have just read to you. It is an assertion which will be admitted by persons of all sects and parties; and all will concur in praising the conduct of those, who make it their constant endeavour *to keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* Yet if we cast our eyes around us; if we turn from words to actions, where shall we discover the good effects of such an opinion? Instead of that peace and good-will which might be expected, do we not see men, continually involved in broils and animosities? Though bound together by the strongest ties, though our inducements *to duell together in unity* are most numerous and engaging, yet many circumstances occur, which contribute to interrupt our tranquillity, to destroy the pleasing charities of life, and set us at variance with each other. Too often is this unhappy effect produced by the most trifling causes---by causes so trifling as even sometimes to escape observation, and we look with astonishment at the blaze which an unperceived spark has occasioned. Often are words and intentions misunderstood or misrepresented,

misrepresented, and before there is an opportunity of explaining, bitter enmities have arisen, and the inflamed passions refuse to hear the calm voice of reason. But though trifling causes occasion many of those disputes which diminish the happiness of social life, there are some sources of disunion which are more powerful in their operation, and more extensive in their effects. Such is that competition of interests which disturbs the repose of kingdoms, which carries the horrid din of war to the most distant regions, which loosens or breaks asunder the bonds of society, and produces animosities in private life---not only setting neighbour against neighbour, but also a son against his father, and a brother against his brother. Envy and discontent lead some to deprive others of their property, and even of their lives; and those who already have much are too often anxious to get more, even by the most unwarrantable means. “ This is the direful spring of woes unnumbered.”

RELIGION

RELIGION too, that mild preceptress, *all whose ways are pleasantness, and her paths peace*, strange as it may appear, has been the cause, at least the pretended cause of many dissensions. O benevolent JESUS ! by what strange fatality has it come to pass, that men equally professing to receive thee as their **LORD** and **MASTER**, should neglect thy divine command *to love one another as brethren*, and be too ready to view each other in a light peculiarly odious, cherishing the most unfriendly, nay the most malignant sentiments ? and why ? Because they worship not the same God in the same manner, because from the influence of different educations, and different means of information, they profess different articles of belief, and endeavour to arrive at the same goal by different paths. Yet quarrels that have arisen from this origin, have been very prevalent, and we have no present prospect of their termination. Until bigotry, the child of ignorance, ceases to influence so many, teaching them, that none can deserve their love who adopt not their opinions; until men cease to attach themselves

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to a party, they know not why, and care not wherefore, endeavouring to promote the interest of that party rather than the welfare of the whole community; until the gospel precept be generally adopted, of letting *every man be fully persuaded in his own mind*, as answerable only to God for his religious principles; and we enquire, not what are the articles of a man's creed, but how he has conducted himself in the several duties and relations of life; until then we must expect religious dissensions; and must lament that even the humane and benevolent are often prevented by circumstances from giving way to the generous feelings of their hearts; that the sad remembrance of past evils, or the apprehension of future ones operate so powerfully on their minds, as occasionally to influence their conduct, and lead them, not without reluctance, to perform actions, which, however their motives may palliate, cannot be reconciled with that Christian Charity, *which suffereth long and is kind, which is not easily provoked, but beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.*

SEVERAL other circumstances might be mentioned which lead to a breach of that unity which is described by the Psalmist as *good and pleasant*. One, however, it is scarcely possible to avoid mentioning on account of the extensive evils which have arisen from it. I mean that total want of religious principle, which has been generally and naturally accompanied by a desire of overturning to their very foundations the present institutions of social order. Though this desire has been, in some instances, occasioned by a benevolent, but chimerical hope of improving the state of mankind, overlooking those evils which are present and certain, in the prospect of advantages which are distant and uncertain ; yet in the many, it appears to have arisen from a restless love of change, and the hope that a state of anarchy and confusion may favour the views of their avarice or ambition, passions which when the curb of religion is removed, can have nothing to check their impetuosity, or prevent them from pursuing the object of their desires through the most dangerous and horrid paths.

Be the causes however what they may, the effects have been but too visible. Examine the history of mankind from the earliest ages, and what do you find but accounts of the desolations and slaughters that have been occasioned by contending nations? Do not wars rise up in perpetual succession as we turn over the melancholy pages, until we see almost the whole earth deluged with human blood? Whilst how seldom are our minds relieved by a picture of happiness, by the pleasing effects of unity and peace! Not only do we find nation rising against nation, but we behold *kingdoms divided against themselves* and disturbed by intestine commotions. Powerful factions seek only to harass each other, and their animosities terminate at last in the utmost horrors of civil discord. Do not even the inhabitants of the same town, give way to variance and ill-will, in consequence of divisions often trifling and absurd, and seldom, if ever, important enough to justify the miseries they occasion? Alas! my brethren, can we here avoid turning our thoughts to our own wretched country,

which is so melancholy an example of the horrors of civil discord, and the sad consequences of rebellion ? The evils which deluded wretches have brought upon themselves and upon all around them, are such as make the heart bleed at the recital of them. What have those men to answer for, who have been the authors of such calamities !

SAD however as are these public quarrels, it would be well if the spirit of contention extended no farther ; if it did not enter into the nearer and dearer relations of private life. Such however is the weakness of human nature that even those who are most connected by the ties of friendship and blood, are too apt to forget their mutual obligations, and to give way to an angry and quarrelsome disposition. Hence it is that neighbours and acquaintance are filled with hatred for each other. Hence it is that the love of friends which “ grew with their growth and strengthened with their strength ” has been changed into the most bitter enmity. Hence it is that the nearest

nearest relations regard each other with abhorrence ; so that domestic happiness is impaired, and its sweets mingled with the bitter drops of strife and resentment.

AND was it for this we were created ? Can we justly infer that this was the design of our Almighty benefactor ? No ; far otherwise. Every thing enforces the doctrine that *it is good and pleasant to dwell together in unity.* Whatever be the causes of our contention, we may say in the language of scripture, *Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? It is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves. We are the creatures of his power and the children of his love. His power alone has breathed into us the breath of life.* And he has created us with like faculties of body and mind, so as to distinguish us from all the other classes of beings we see around us. *We are all made a little lower than the angels, and created in the image of God.* We are all cast in the same mould, having the same figure and faculties of body, and the same passions and capacities of mind. And they were bestowed on us to answer

answer the same gracious design. Every man in every station was intended by his Heavenly Father, to perform the duties incumbent on him in the present state of his existence. Every man was designed to cultivate the best knowledge, and the most amiable dispositions, and thus prepare himself for a future life. All are, in short, placed here as candidates for immortality. It may be farther urged that we partake the same blessings and the same calamities during our continuance in this lower world. We are all sharers in those rich and abundant mercies in the multitude of which we now appear before God. Neither the bounties of creation and providence, nor the advantages of society have been confined to any favoured portion of his creatures. We all enjoy the same seasons; the same agreeable vicissitudes of day and night, of seed-time and harvest. Some indeed have a greater number and variety of external benefits than others; but still it cannot be said with regard to any human being that he is neglected or forsaken by his all-powerful and gracious benefactor.---In like

like manner, the sorrows of human life make a part of the experience of every individual. This is a warfare from which none are exempted ; though some for wise and important reasons are obliged to drink much deeper than others, of the cup of affliction. We also resemble each other in our conclusion. Whether we be cut off in the morning of our days, or be permitted to linger until the latest hour, we pursue the same course. We come into the world helpless infants, and advance through the stages of youth and manhood, until the dread messenger of death summon us to the silent grave, *the house appointed for all the living.* The former generations of men have been swept away ; the present generations will shortly follow them ; and this will be the case with generations yet unborn. We resemble each other also in the uncertainty of our duration. We are alike unable to *boast ourselves of the morrow, not knowing what the present day may bring forth.*

CONSIDERING then human life as a journey, we are all of us travelling the same road,

road, and have, or ought to have the same great object in view, to arrive happily at the termination of it. Is not then some union with our fellow-creatures, necessary to the comfort of our situation ? Without it, will not our road appear desolate and uninviting ? We accordingly find that our heavenly Father, ever kind and considerate, has not only given us a common nature and common benefits; but has also placed us in various relations, which are more or less diversified according to our situations in life. Numerous and important are the duties which arise from our possessing a common nature. The connexion however of man with man becomes more intimate, when they are members of the same civil society. Men born and educated in the same kingdom, protected by the same government, obeying the same laws, enjoying the same privileges, and interested in the success of the same measures, must have strong additional reasons for mutual attachment. The public happiness must be the concern of all, and peace and good-will amongst themselves cannot fail largely to contribute  
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to it. Our ties however may be drawn still closer. Our attachment will be naturally increased, by the circumstance of belonging to the same religious society, believing the same doctrines, worshipping our God and Father in the same place, and the same manner, and encouraging one another in the ardent pursuit of *glory, honour, and immortality*. It is scarcely necessary to add that the ties of blood connect us still more closely. Who is there amongst us who has not felt those powerful instincts to domestick life which our father has planted within us? Who has not tasted the pleasures which spring from the charities of father, of son, and of brother? In families the union that subsists between us is drawn to its nearest point. In them a mutual connection is rendered indissoluble, and becomes absolutely essential to our happiness. May we not then justly conclude, from these provisions for it that it was the design of our Heavenly Father that men *should dwell together in unity?*

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AND are not the consequences of a contrary spirit most dreadful ? It dissolves our social connections, deprives our souls of their sweetest, their most delightful sensations, and renders them the abodes of every base and malignant, of every boisterous and resentful disposition. But *how good and how pleasant* must be the spirit of love ! How happy must it render men in themselves ! How lovely in the eyes of others ! Wherever it appears it charms the heart of man ; and the effect of it strikes every beholder with pleasure. By cultivating such a spirit, therefore, we shall take an effectual means of securing to ourselves the affection and good offices of those amongst whom we live ; we shall secure the highest pleasure of which as human beings, we are capable ; we shall enlarge and dignify our minds ; and leading the life of heaven here, we shall fit and prepare ourselves for those blissful regions where peace and harmony, love and friendship shall have their everlasting abode.

My friends, is not such a temper as this perpetually urged upon us by the Christian revelation ?

revelation? What was the character and conduct of our blessed Saviour himself? Did he not exhibit the warmest benevolence, the greatest tenderness and delicacy of affection? Did he not bear with the weaknesses and imperfections of his disciples with perfect mildness? Did not his soul overflow with good-will towards all beings capable of happiness? Did he not go about doing good from a generous concern for the everlasting welfare of mankind? How amiable too was his deportment! ever peaceable, kind, and tender! He never engaged in angry debates and quarrels. He never disturbed the peace of the community by turbulent behaviour. He never gave way to feelings of malice and resentment. On the contrary, when in the utmost anguish it was possible to feel, he supplicated pardon for his persecutors. Such was his example, and he evidently intended to make us truly *sons of peace*, to make us at peace with God; at peace with ourselves; and at peace with one another. For this purpose he endured the labours and sufferings of this mortal life; and for this purpose he

died upon the cross. In his gospel we have the most powerful motives to cultivate the same temper of mind which was also in him, and are commanded to shew our affection for him by our conduct to our brethren. If therefore we do not banish from our hearts all malice and violent resentment; if we suffer our souls to be fullied by sour and malevolent passions, and thus render the earth, as far as lies in our power, an uncomfortable scene, a dreary desert, what will be the consequence? *Not having the spirit of Christ, we can be none of his.* Whatever professions of attachment we may make; however earnestly we may call on him as our Lord and Master, he will not acknowledge us. Without love, all other attainments can profit us nothing; for this is that most excellent quality *which never fails;* this it is which marks the true disciples of the PRINCE OF PEACE. If therefore we are deficient in this, we must have our portion with those who were contentious, who did not obey the truth, but were the slaves of their corrupt and turbulent passions.

INDUCED

INDUCED then, my Christian Friends, by these motives which reason and revelation afford, let us act at all times in such a manner, that we may experience *how good and how pleasant a thing it is for brethren to dwell together in unity.* As fellow-countrymen, and fellow-citizens, let us sacrifice every petty jealousy and interest to a regard for the public good. Whilst our governors, having now, (thanks be to the Almighty ruler of events!) almost, if not entirely quelled open insurrection, and punished many of the leaders and instigators of it; whilst they, sensible that "mercy becomes the throned monarch better than his crown," and "that earthly power doth then show likest God's, when mercy seasons justice," hold out offers of pardon and protection to any of the deluded multitude who will return to their allegiance,----let us, each according to his station and influence, use our exertions to heal the wounds of our country. Whilst every just and necessary precaution is taken to prevent like evils, let us carefully avoid every thing that can tend only to irritate and enflame. Actuated by a spirit

rit of true patriotism, let us lay aside all animosities and all useless distinctions, and let our only contest be, who can best serve our common country. Religious distinctions will continue to exist; but whilst we retain our attachment to that *form of Godliness*, which appears to us best calculated to promote the *spirit of Godliness*, let us cultivate charitable sentiments for men of every sect, remembering that no religious worship founded on the gospel, can fail to teach men *to do justice and love mercy*, if they suffer themselves to be influenced by it. Let us then study to deserve the character given by the excellent Archbishop Tillotson of one of his deceased friends. " He was of a disposition ready " to embrace and to oblige all men, allow- " ing others to differ from him, even in " opinions that were very dear to him. " Provided men did but fear God and work " righteousness, he loved them heartily, " how distant soever from him in judg- " ment about less necessary things. In " which," adds the good Archbishop, " he " is worthy to be propounded as an exam- " ple to men of all persuasions." Happy would

would it be for the world, if all men entertained such sentiments! But, my friends, however others may act contrary to this spirit of peace, let us study to be influenced by it; and, whilst we pay a proper regard to our own safety, let us encourage charitable opinions of all men, that we may resemble the *God of love, and become perfect, even as he our father in heaven is perfect.* With this view, let us constantly guard against those prejudices and passions that tend to alienate our hearts from one another. Let us check the first risings of every malevolent disposition; and throw aside every mean and narrow view. Let us cultivate the most enlarged and generous sentiments; and embrace every opportunity of exercising benevolent affections, being assured that they will thus gather strength, and render us amiable in the eyes of men, acceptable to God, and happy in ourselves. Let us, in particular be cautious in giving offence, and slow in taking it. By being cautious in giving offence, we shall avoid the causes of animosity, and shall secure the general esteem and good-will of those around

around us. By being slow in taking offence, we shall preserve many a valuable friendship, and shall enjoy that peace and satisfaction, which can only exist in the absence of every anxious wish, and every turbulent affection.

**To conclude,** Let us, my Christian Friends, be persuaded, as children of the same God, and disciples of the same Master, to live in love, *even as Christ also loved us.* Let us cultivate sentiments of meekness, candour, and benevolence; and constantly attend to the powerful arguments and motives by which they are recommended in the gospel. Thus *dwelling together in unity*, we shall enjoy the truest pleasure this life can afford, and shall be preparing for those realms where all shall be peace and happiness for ever.

4 OC 58

A HYMN,

A HYMN,  
(TAKEN FROM A LONDON COLLECTION,  
AND SUNG ON THIS OCCASION.)

O GOD, my saviour, and my king,  
Of all I have, or hope, the spring !  
Send down thy spirit from above,  
And warm my heart with holy love.

May I from ev'ry act abstain,  
That hurts or gives another pain !  
Still may I feel my heart inclin'd  
To be the friend of all mankind !

With pity let my breast o'erflow  
When I behold a brother's woe ;  
And bear a sympathizing part,  
Whene'er I meet a wounded heart.

And let my neighbour's prosp'rous state  
A mutual joy in me create ;  
His virtuous triumph let me join ;  
His peace and happiness be mine.

Let love through all my conduct shine,  
An image fair, though faint, of thine !  
Let me thy humble follower prove,  
Father of men, great GOD of love !

2 E A R M O N  
MONTESINOS CONSIDERATIONE

(MONTESINOS CONSIDERATIONE)

qui videntur quoniam sunt o

quoniam est quod non videt o

MONTESINOS CONSIDERATIONE

est quod non videt o

qui dicitur quoniam videt o

quoniam videt o

